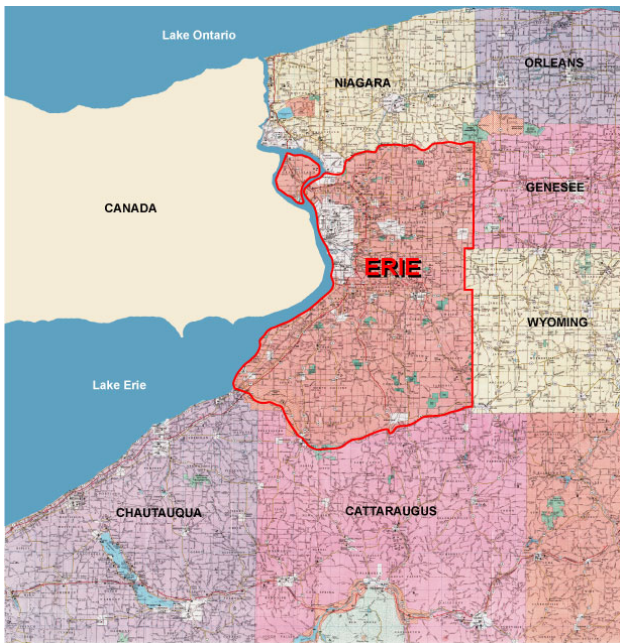




Figure 2-1 - Regional Context Map



2.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 COUNTY OVERVIEW

REGIONAL SETTING

Erie County is situated at the eastern end of Lake Erie in western New York State and covers 1,054 square miles of land. The county extends over 43 miles from Niagara County on the north to Cattaraugus and Chautauque Counties on the south, and 24 miles from Genesee and Wyoming Counties on the east to Lake Erie on the west. Erie County possesses approximately 77 miles of shoreline along Lake Erie and the Niagara River. The Province of Ontario, Canada, lies on the west bank of the Niagara River.

Much of the northwest quarter of Erie County includes the heavily-urbanized areas of the City of Buffalo, and its surrounding suburbs, including the City of Lackawanna. This urbanization extends north into Niagara County, through the City of Niagara Falls (approximately 20 miles from Downtown Buffalo). Meanwhile the easternmost towns within Erie County and the southern half of the county remain primarily rural in nature with numerous smaller hamlets and villages.

Other metropolitan areas in proximity to Erie County include Rochester (60 miles east), Hamilton, Ontario (60 miles west), Toronto, Ontario (100 miles northwest), Erie, PA (90 miles southwest) and Cleveland, OH (180 miles southwest).

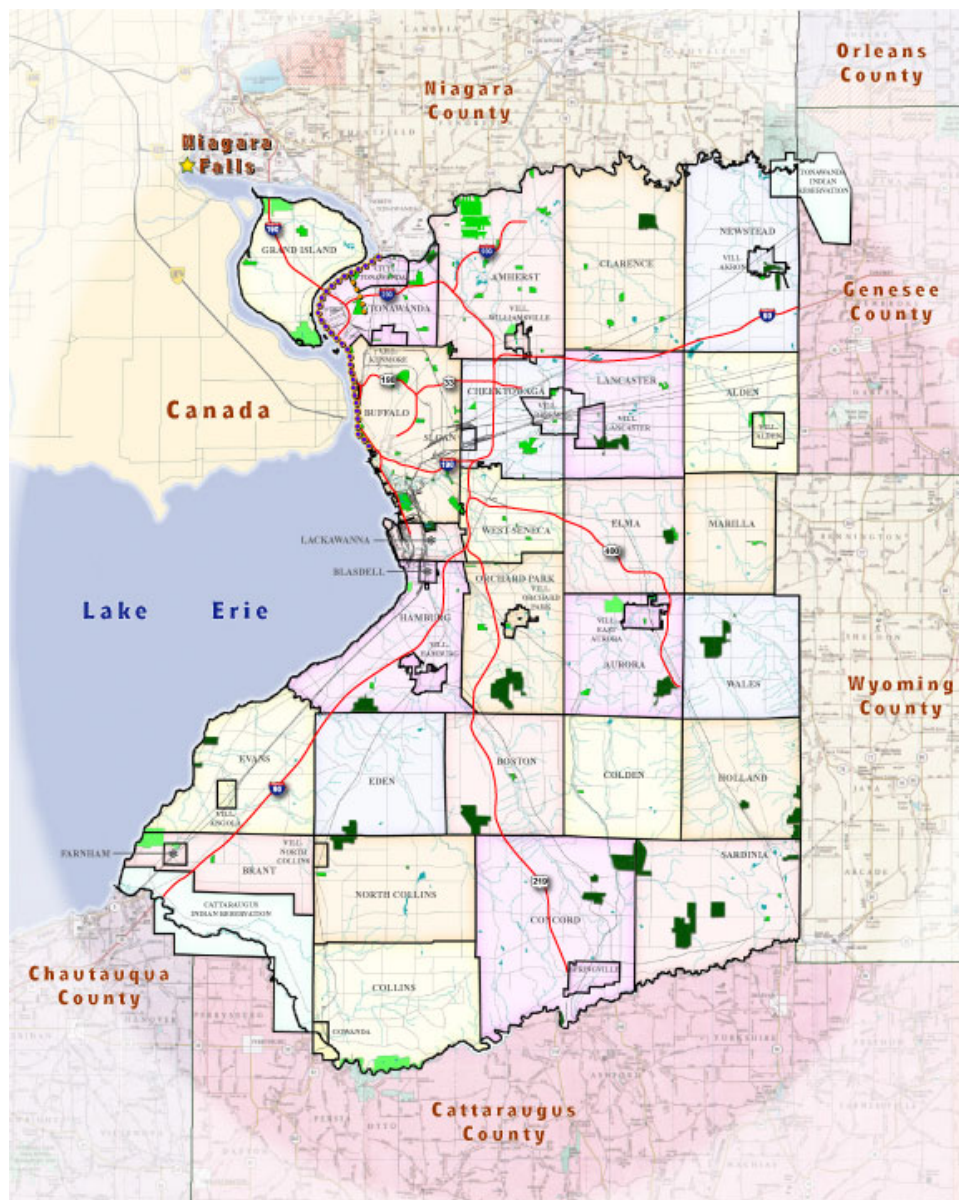
TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Erie County is well served by various forms of transportation. The New York State Thruway (I-90) passes through Erie County from the southwest to the northeast; this highway is the major interstate route in the region. Other interstate spur routes include: the Niagara Thruway (I-190), linking I-90 with Downtown Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Canada; the Youngmann Highway (I-290) passing through northwest Erie County and bypassing Downtown Buffalo to link I-90 and I-190; and the Lockport Expressway (I-990), passing northerly through the north-central section of Amherst linking to other area

arterials and the City of Lockport in Niagara County. Other limited-access highways serving Erie County include: US 219, linking I-90 in the north with the Village of Springville to the south and passing through south-central Erie County; NY 400, linking I-90 in the north with East Aurora and South Wales in southeastern Erie County; and NY 5, NY 179, NY 198 and NY 33, which form a network of expressways within Buffalo and first-ring suburban towns.

Major east-west state arterials in Erie County include: NY 5 and US 20 (both of which cross New York State from Erie, PA to Albany); NY 354 and US 20A, serving central Erie County; and NY 39, which crosses southern Erie County.

Major north-south state arterials include: US 62, which passes from Niagara Falls through Buffalo to southwest Erie County; NY 240 and NY 277, serving north-central and south-central Erie County; NY 16, which is a southern extension of NY 400 serving southeast Erie County and proceeding south to Olean; and NY 78, serving central Erie County and proceeding north through the City of Lockport to the Lake Ontario shore.



Erie County, NY

Highway access to Canada is provided via the Peace Bridge, located one mile north of Downtown Buffalo and spanning the Niagara River between Buffalo and Fort Erie, Ontario. The Canadian terminus of the Peace Bridge is conveniently connected to the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW), a limited-access highway serving Niagara Falls (ONT), St. Catharines, Hamilton and Toronto. Additional highway access to Canada is available via three other bridges (the Rainbow, Whirlpool and Lewiston-Queenston Bridges) located in Niagara County. In addition, the Peace Bridge provides convenient access to Highway 3,

REGIONAL CHANGES

The City of Buffalo is the second largest city in New York State and has long been the center of Erie County's population, government and culture. Buffalo's prosperity came as a result of the development of the Erie Canal, which linked the Eastern Seaboard to the upper Great Lakes. At the turn of the 20th Century, Buffalo was the 8th largest City in the country and one of the busiest port cities in the world. At the height of its prosperity (and prior to suburban expansion), the population within the City limits reached almost 700,000 people. However, by the 1960s much of Buffalo's good fortunes began to change with the opening of the Welland Canal, the decline of the steel industry and the post-war excelleration of suburbanization, among many other factors. At of the turn of this century, the 2000 census revealed that the City's population had dipped to below 300,00 people.

Meanwhile Erie County as a whole has faired much better overall, but unfortunately the outlying towns have grown as the city has shrunk. The earliest expansion into the first-ring communities occurred in the 1920s with some of the earliest "suburban" housing pushing outside the city limits into such places as Kenmore, Eggertsville and Snyder. During this time, Erie County Acquired its original four parks of Emery, Ellicott Creek, Como Lake and Chestnut Ridge. In their earliest days, these large, multi-purpose parks sat within a rural countryside, and were largely destination parks for residents of the city. Later, Akron Falls Park was added to the list of parks. Following World War II and into the 1970s, major housing booms ocured in the Towns of Tonawanda, Amherst, Cheektowaga, West Seneca and Hamburg. Lackawanna also maximized its population base during this time. Given this prolific outward expansion into the suburbs, Erie County acquired a number of additional large land holdings (current Conservation Parks, etc.) to be prepared to handle future population expansion and recreational needs. As predicted by previous studies, post 1980s growth has pushed even further into the outer reaches of the county, with continued major growth in Amherst, and acceleraered "suburban sprawl" into second-ring suburbs such as Grand Island, Clarence, Lancaster, Elma and Orchard Park.

Following a national trend, suburban expansion and "sprawl" into the green-fields of Erie County has also caused a shift in recreational needs, with many families moving to newer housing options outside the city limits and thus demanding more services and community amenities.

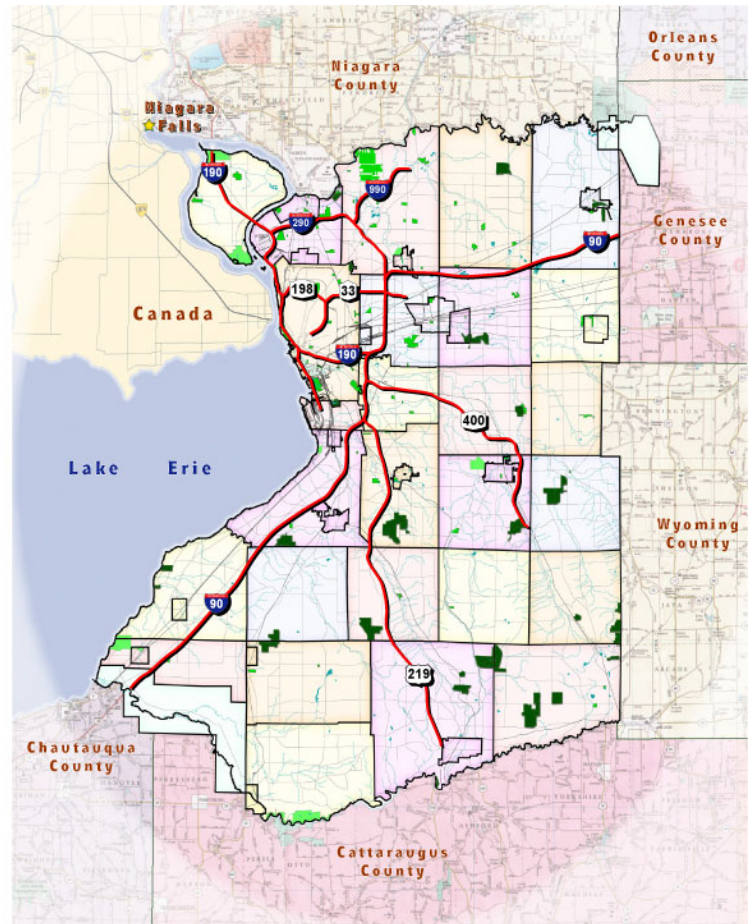


Figure 2-2 - Erie County Transportation Network

a major east-west Provincial Highway along the north shore of Lake Erie.

Public transportation within Erie County is provided by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) , which maintains an extensive bus network primarily serving the urbanized northwestern portion of the County. Regular routes are also provided to most of the 44 municipalities in Erie County. In addition, the NFTA operates a 6.4-mile light rail rapid transit line extending from Downtown Buffalo northwest along Main Street (NY 5) to the State University of New York at Buffalo's South Campus at the Amherst and Tonawanda borders.

The NFTA also operates the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport in the Erie County Town of Cheektowaga, as well as Niagara Falls International Airport in Niagara County.

LAND USE

The most intensely-developed area of Erie County is the northwest portion – specifically the Cities of Buffalo, Lackawanna and Tonawanda; the Towns of Tonawanda, Cheektowaga, Amherst and West Seneca; the northern portion of Hamburg; northwest Orchard Park; and the Villages of Depew and Lancaster. This area, which contains roughly 20% of Erie County's total land area, contains approximately 70% of the County's developed land. Suburban sprawl has extended this development further north, east and south, with more and more open lands disappearing each year.

Residential uses are fairly evenly distributed throughout these areas. Major concentrations of industrial uses exist in South Buffalo and the western third of the Town of Tonawanda, and in the central portions of Cheektowaga and Depew. Strip commercial development occurs along most major highways; significant concentrations of commercial development exist in Downtown Buffalo, the Niagara Falls Boulevard/Sheridan Drive/Maple Road areas of Tonawanda and Amherst, the Main Street/Transit Road area in Amherst and Clarence, the Walden Avenue/Union Road area in Cheektowaga, and the Ridge Road/Seneca Street area in West Seneca.

Major institutional uses include the two campuses of the State University of New York at Buffalo (the newer North Campus in central Amherst and the older, original South Campus in the northeast corner of Buffalo), Buffalo State College in North Buffalo, Daemen College in Snyder (southwestern Amherst), Hilbert College in Hamburg and the three campuses of Erie Community College (Amherst, Buffalo and Hamburg). Other major institutions include the Roswell Park Memorial Institute/Buffalo General Hospital complex (one mile north of Downtown) and numerous other hospital and health care facilities.

The remainder of Erie County is predominantly rural. Significant development is still occurring in northern Amherst, western Clarence, western Lancaster and in portions of Hamburg and Orchard Park. To a slightly lesser degree development is also occurring in portions of Grand Island, Elma, Aurora, Evans and Boston. Development in these areas is most frequently single-family residential.

Beyond the developing areas, agriculture remains a dominant land use. Typically, vegetable farming is more intense on the level lands



Historic shelter - Chestnut Ridge Park



Cattaraugus Creek, upstream of the dam at Scoby Dam Park.



Eighteen Mile Creek Park

of northeast Erie County than in the hilly south (where dairy farming is common). Vineyards are cultivated in some portions of southwest Erie County. Several important villages and hamlets are located within the rural areas: These include the Villages of Alden and Akron as well as the hamlets of Clarence, Clarence Center and Marilla in the northeast; the Villages of East Aurora and Springville, as well as the hamlets of Holland, Colden and Sardinia in the southeast; and the Villages of Angola, Farnham, Gowanda and North Collins, as well as the hamlets of Eden, Collins, Collins Center, Langford, Boston, North Boston and Patchin in the southwest. Residential development also occupies most of the lakeshore in Erie County south of the City of Lackawanna, where numerous former “summer” cottage areas have transitioned to year-round residential communities.

ERIE COUNTY HISTORY

Prior to European settlement Erie County was populated by the Seneca Indians of the Iroquois confederacy. Today, portions of two Indian Reservations are located in Erie County: The Tonawanda Indian Reservation in extreme northeast Erie County, and the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation in the extreme southwest.

The first European outpost in Erie county – A French trading post at the mouth of the Buffalo River on Lake Erie – was established in 1758. No additional settlement occurred until 1804, when much of Western New York was acquired by the Holland Land Company. The region was surveyed and plans were prepared for a village at the site of present-day downtown Buffalo. Growth was slow until 1825 due to the area’s remoteness and the War of 1812 (the village of Buffalo was burned during the war).

The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 transformed Buffalo into a major transshipment point between East Coast ports and the midwest. Buffalo’s population increased from 2,000 in 1820 to 42,000 by 1850. By 1900 the city’s population exceeded 352,000 and was ranked eighth in the country. During this time Buffalo became established as the world’s leading grain-milling center. Industrialization, especially steel manufacturing, became dominant in the local economy. In the outskirts the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda became major centers of a lumber industry, which utilized large stands of forests on Grand Island. At the turn of the century, inexpensive hydroelectricity from Niagara Falls was available

to sustain Buffalo's industrial facilities. By 1920 automobile manufacturing was well established. In that year Buffalo's population exceeded 506,000, while the population of Erie County was over 634,000.

Until the 1940's most of Erie County's population was concentrated in the City of Buffalo (in 1940, out of a total county population of 798,000, roughly 78% (576,000) resided in the City). Post-war suburbanization had changed this population distribution so that by 1960 nearly half of the County's population now resided outside the city limits. Much of the suburban expansion occurred north an east of the City into the Towns of Tonawanda, Amherst and Cheektowaga (Tonawanda grew from a population of 32,000 in 1940 to 105,000 by 1960).

While post-war suburbanization was significantly changing settlement and land use patterns in the region, post-war economic changes were also occurring. The opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway and Welland Canal in the late 1950s permitted ocean vessels to navigate the Upper Great Lakes and bypass the ports and transshipment points in Buffalo. Coupled with the declining importance of railroads, the earlier transportation advantages once enjoyed by Buffalo began to diminish. Heavy industry, which had traditionally dominated the regional economy, also began to decline.

Figure 2-3 - Erie County Population Table

| Population for Erie County and Towns | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|----------------------------------|
| | Years | | | | Increase/Decrease from 1970-2000 |
| | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | |
| Erie County | 1,113,491 | 1,015,472 | 968,532 | 950,265 | -163,226 |
| Towns | | | | | |
| Alden | 9,787 | 10,093 | 10,372 | 10,470 | 683 |
| Amherst | 93,929 | 108,706 | 111,711 | 116,510 | 22,581 |
| Aurora | 14,426 | 13,872 | 13,433 | 13,996 | -430 |
| Boston | 7,158 | 7,687 | 7,445 | 7,897 | 739 |
| Brant | 2,672 | 2,437 | 2,119 | 1,906 | -766 |
| Buffalo | 462,768 | 357,870 | 328,123 | 292,648 | -170,120 |
| Cheektowaga | 113,844 | 109,442 | 99,314 | 94,019 | -19,825 |
| Clarence | 18,168 | 18,146 | 20,041 | 26,123 | 7,955 |
| Colden | 3,020 | 3,128 | 2,899 | 3,323 | 303 |
| Collins | 6,400 | 5,037 | 6,020 | 8,307 | 1,907 |
| Concord | 7,573 | 8,171 | 8,387 | 8,526 | 953 |
| Eden | 7,644 | 7,327 | 7,416 | 8,076 | 432 |
| Elma | 10,011 | 10,574 | 10,355 | 11,304 | 1,293 |
| Evans | 14,570 | 17,961 | 17,478 | 17,594 | 3,024 |
| Grand Island | 13,977 | 16,770 | 17,561 | 18,621 | 4,644 |
| Hamburg | 47,644 | 53,270 | 53,735 | 56,259 | 8,615 |
| Holland | 3,140 | 3,446 | 3,572 | 3,603 | 463 |
| Lackawanna | 28,657 | 22,701 | 20,585 | 19,064 | -9,593 |
| Lancaster | 30,634 | 30,144 | 32,181 | 39,019 | 8,385 |
| Marilla | 3,250 | 4,861 | 5,250 | 5,709 | 2,459 |
| Newstead | 6,322 | 7,231 | 7,440 | 8,404 | 2,082 |
| North Collins | 4,090 | 3,791 | 3,502 | 3,376 | -714 |
| Orchard Park | 19,978 | 24,359 | 24,632 | 27,637 | 7,659 |
| Sardinia | 2,505 | 2,792 | 2,667 | 2,692 | 187 |
| Tonawanda | 107,282 | 91,269 | 82,464 | 78,155 | -29,127 |
| Wales | 2,617 | 2,844 | 2,917 | 2,960 | 343 |
| West Seneca | 48,404 | 51,210 | 47,830 | 45,920 | -2,484 |



Spring waters in Akron falls park

The 1970's and 1980's were decades of major economic transition. Steel manufacturing ceased and grain milling was significantly curtailed. The City of Buffalo's population decreased from 532,000 in 1960, to 357,000 in 1980, and under the 2000 census data, dipped below 300,000 to 292,000 people for the first time since the late 1800s; this population exodus has been accompanied by substantial urban deterioration.

During the same period, however, the population of Erie County remained relatively stable – increasing from, 1,064,000 in 1960 to 1,113,000 in 1970, and then decreasing to 1,015,000 in 1980. Unfortunately this overall County population decrease has continued, with a total of 968,000 in 1990 and 950,000 in 2000, a decrease of over 163,000 people in the past thirty years.

During this same thirty year period, extensive suburban development has occurred in the Town of Amherst, stimulated partly by the construction of the newer 1200-acre campus for the State University of New York at Buffalo. Major office parks have been constructed, and Amherst has now become one of the largest employment centers in Western New York. Meanwhile, efforts to revitalize downtown Buffalo and the waterfront have been much more difficult, as the economy of Upstate New York continues to lag behind the rest of the nation.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND POPULATION

As mentioned earlier, the population of Erie County has declined over the past thirty years, with a loss of over 163,000 people. Although there has been a well-documented steady decline in the urban population from the City of Buffalo for many years, the 2000 census also revealed some startling “sprawl-related” statistics that population loss is now also being experienced by the first-ring suburban communities within Erie County as well. The Town of Amherst, which has epitomized strong residential and business-sector growth over the past three-decades, has also begun to level out its population base as continued suburban “sprawl” pushes further development in the neighborhood communities of Clarence and Pendleton (Niagara County). A table of Erie County's population for the past thirty years is located below: Some highlighted observations include:

- *The City of Buffalo has lost over 170,000 people since*

1970, from 463,768 to 292,648 (2000 data).

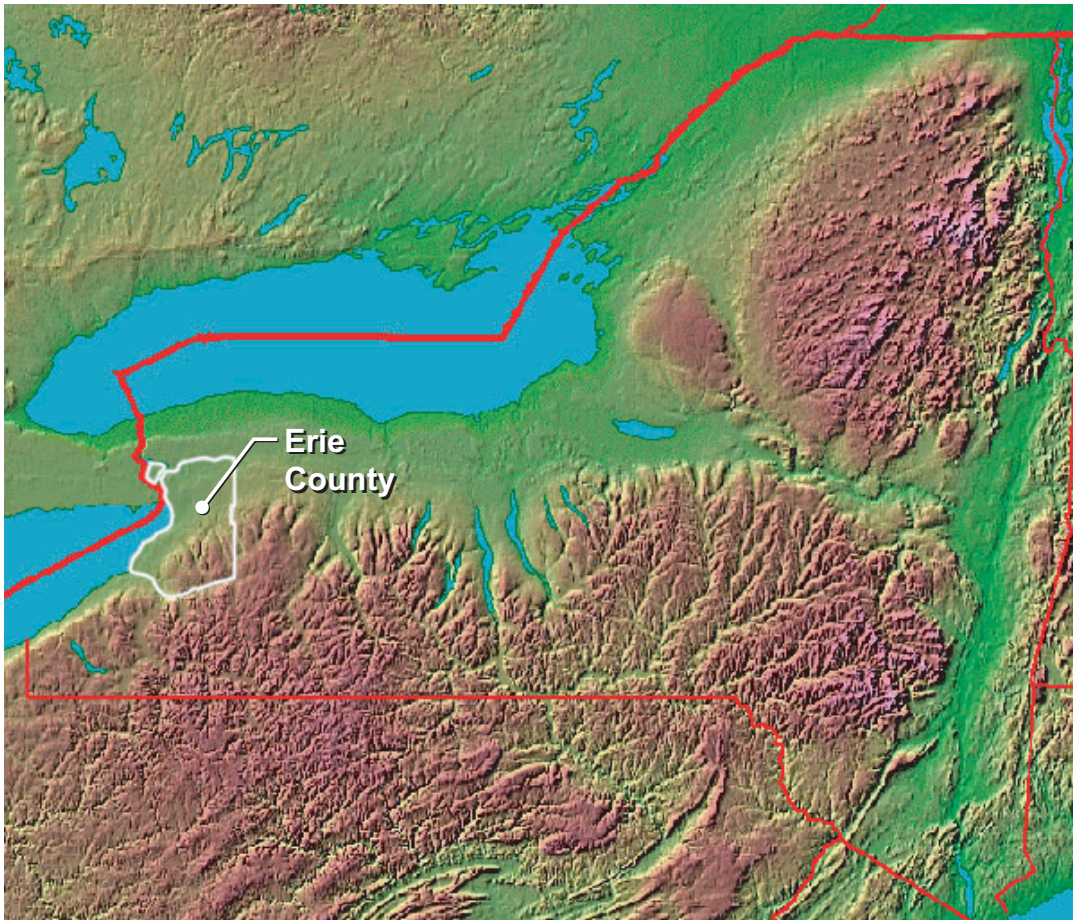
- *Not including Amherst, Buffalo's first-ring suburbs have also lost significant population of over 61,000 people between 1970 and 2000. (Includes Cheektowaga, Lackawanna, Tonawanda and West Seneca)*
- *Conversely, the second-ring suburbs (Grand Island, Clarence, Lancaster, Elma, Aurora, Orchard Park and Hamburg) have increased in population by over 38,000 people, which highlights a definite re-shifting of population across Erie County.*
- *The outermost towns along the eastern county border and the southern 1/3 of the county have gained over 12,000 people since 1970.*

2.2 NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE SETTING

2.2.1 NATURAL HERITAGE

LANDFORM

The landscapes of the Buffalo-Niagara region were shaped some 17,000 years ago, following the latest of the glacial periods that covered much of the continent. As the glaciers receded across the region, they created two vast inland lakes, glacial Lake Iroquois and glacial Lake Tonawanda. The glacial meltwaters receded, - leaving Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, surrounded by flat lake plains, and a series of escarpments cutting across these plains. Erie County lies within two distinct topographic areas: the Great Lakes Plain along the lakeshore, and throughout the northern half of the County, and the higher Allegheny Plateau in the south-central and southeastern areas. The Great Lakes Plain is divided by several widely spaced escarpments, including the Onandaga Escarpment, a 50' to 80' high ridge which can be seen in Erie County generally following Route 5 from the Buffalo city line through Amherst and Clarence. The escarpment separates the Huron Plain to the north from the Erie Plain to the south.



The Erie Plain extends to the Portage Escarpment in the south, a 150' to 250' beach ridge that delineates the northern limit of the Allegheny Plateau. The Allegheny Plateau itself provides a definitive terrain characterized by steep hills and wide valleys, some of which achieve a vertical elevation change of from 300' to 400'.

RIVERS AND STREAMS

Erie County lies within the Lake Erie/Niagara River drainage basin, and includes a number of major streams:

- *Northern Erie County- Tonawanda Creek, and its*

major tributaries of Ellicott, Ransom, Black, Beeman, Gott and Murder Creeks;

- *Central Erie County – Buffalo River, Cayuga Creek, Cazenovia Creek;*
- *Southern Erie County – Eighteen Mile Creek, Big Sister Creek, Cattaraugus Creek (which forms the southern county boundary) and its major tributary of Clear Creek*

The headwaters of several of the major creek systems originate on the Allegheny Plateau and the Onondaga Escarpment, giving rise to dramatic gorges and waterfalls as the creeks flow toward Lake Erie and the Niagara River. Many of these natural heritage features are protected within the County park system. The valley systems are primarily forested in their upper reaches. Through the Huron Plain, which is generally low lying, poorly draining and flat, its river systems are characterized by broad floodplains and numerous wetlands.

CLIMATE

The climate of Erie County is profoundly influenced by the presence of Lake Erie. The climate is moist-continental, having cold temperatures with infrequent, intense precipitation in summer. In Buffalo summer temperature averages 69 degrees, with an average maximum of 78 degrees and a record high of 98 degrees; during winter, temperatures average 26 degrees, with an average minimum of 20 degrees and a record low of -20 degrees. Lake Erie provides a moderating effect on temperatures throughout the year.

Precipitation varies from 32" annually in extreme northern Erie County to 43" in the extreme southeast. Precipitation in the City of Buffalo averages 37" annually. Considerable annual snowfalls occur south of the City. In the Allegheny Plateau area of Erie County, annual snowfalls vary from 120" to over 140". In contrast, snowfall in northern Erie County averages 70" to 80", and in the City of Buffalo annual snowfall averages 97". About 60% of the snowfall occurs during November, December and January – a fact directly attributable to a relatively warm, open lake combined with cold southwesterly winds, which produce “lake effect” snowfalls.

SIGNIFICANT HABITAT

Although a detailed natural resource inventory has not been undertaken specifically for Erie County, the County parks were historically acquired to protect tracts of lands with significant or scenic natural features, particularly those associated with the creek valley systems, and their associated forested areas. Other sources provide some insight into the terrestrial and aquatic habitat make-up of these systems, and the potential significance of the natural environment areas that are included within the Erie County parks.



Figure 2-4 - Erie County Principal Streams Map

CULTURAL AND HERITAGE ATTRACTIONS

Highlighted cultural and heritage attractions within the City of Buffalo include:

Historical Olmsted System of Parks and Parkways
Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens
Key Underground Railroad sites, including the
Michigan Street Baptist Church and the
Freedom memorial at Broderick Park
Notable buildings by HH Richardson, Frank Lloyd
Wright and Louis Sullivan
Historic Grain Elevators
Albright Knox Art Gallery
Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic site
Buffalo Zoological Gardens
Proposed Erie Canal Harbor site
Historic Allentown Neighborhood
Buffalo and Erie County Naval Military Park
Darwin Martin House and Complex
Kleinhans Music Hall
Sheas Buffalo Theater
Forest Lawn Cemetery

A few other major attractions within Erie County include:

Historic Erie Canal tours
Our Lady of Victory Basilica, Lackawanna
Graycliff (Frank Lloyd Wright), Evans
Roycroft Campus, East Aurora

Major cultural and heritage attractions outside of Erie County, but still within a short drive include:

Old Fort Niagara, Niagara County
Artpark, Niagara County
Niagara Reservation State Park (Olmsted Park),
Niagara County
Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua County
Old Fort Erie, Ontario

Areas of significance that have been identified within Erie County, include the Lake Erie shoreline and Niagara River, which are the Region's most significant natural resources, supporting the Great Lakes fishery, and migratory waterfowl. The Niagara River is renowned as the First Globally Significant Important Bird Area and a prime bird flyway corridor. Linked to the Great Lakes system, Eighteen Mile Creek is an important migratory corridor for songbirds, and contains a diversity of plants and wildlife, including rare and uncommon species. The Cattaraugus Creek and tributaries is the most important Lake Erie tributary for the salmonid fishery within New York State, supporting both spawning and habitat.

A number of wetlands associated with the river systems, and having significant resident and migrant wildlife habitat have been identified in Tonawanda, Lackawanna, Amherst, Cheektowaga, and Buffalo. The most significant in the region being the Tifft Nature Preserve, on the Buffalo River, and the Klydel Wetlands, in North Tonawanda.

2.2.2 CULTURAL HERITAGE

In addition to the historically and naturally significant Erie County Park system, there is also a wealth of other cultural and heritage attractions throughout Erie County, from the urban core to the rural villages and remote countryside. The City of Buffalo has long been the cultural "heart" of the region and includes historical parks and significant architecture, world-renowned arts and lively theater district, to mention just a few of the attractions. The area also is home to strong network of colleges and universities, including the State University of New York at Buffalo. The region is also well-known for its professional sports teams including the Buffalo Bills and the Buffalo Sabres.

A partial listing of major regional cultural and heritage attractions is listed in the sidebar at the left.

2.3 PARK SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

Erie County has a wide network of parks, ranging from undeveloped parks with few, if any "built" amenities, to destination parks, such as Chestnut Ridge Park, that contain a wide variety of facilities. As part of this study, sixteen parks were examined to assess their existing

conditions. These sixteen parks represent all of the developed parks, with the exception of the Botanical Gardens, which was excluded because it was recently addressed in a separate study. Scobey Dam, although primarily undeveloped, was included in order to indicate the conditions of the buildings at that site. The County's undeveloped parks, forestry lots and trail systems were excluded from the analysis. For the most part, the properties that were excluded from the inventory have only very basic features, such as rudimentary roadways or trails, and do not require the same level of management and maintenance that the developed parks require.

Features included in the database were:

- *Bridges: includes roadway and pedestrian bridges*
- *Buildings: enclosed buildings open to the public, such as concession stands, lodges and club houses*
- *Court Sports (Paved): paved sports fields, includes tennis, basketball, street hockey, shuffleboard*
- *Field Sports: any sports facility for a sport or athletic activity played on non-paved surfaces, including baseball, softball, soccer, football, volleyball, skating, golf, skiing and sledding*
- *Playground: play equipment and play structures, including pre-school and school age climbing structures, swings, and associated play surfaces, edging and fencing*
- *Site Amenities: miscellaneous features, including benches, picnic tables, drinking fountains, bike racks, trash receptacles, fencing, flag poles, grills, picnic tables, and similar features. This category also includes larger miscellaneous features, such as boat launches and docks, as well as unique features, such as the Lighthouse at Como Lake Park and the stage at Ellicott Creek Park*
- *Shelters: buildings used as picnic shelters, generally open-air structures consisting of floor, roof and roof supports*
- *Restrooms*
- *Support Buildings: garages, maintenance buildings, sheds, storage buildings and other structures used for support services and not open to the public*
- *Landscape: major features of landscaping, such as*

PARKS SUMMARY TABLE

| Park Name | Municipality | Acres |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Akron Falls | Village of Akron / Newstead | 284 |
| Bailey Avenue | Buffalo | 4 |
| Beeman Creek | Clarence | 391 |
| Bennett Beach | Evans | 51 |
| Boston Forest | Boston | 477 |
| Bot. Gardens | Buffalo | 12 |
| Chestnut Ridge | Orchard Park | 1,231 |
| Como Lake | Lancaster | 534 |
| Eighteen Mile Crk | Hamburg | 464 |
| Ellicott Creek | Tonawanda / Amherst | 165 |
| Elma Meadows | Elma | 220 |
| Emery | Aurora | 489 |
| Franklin Gulf | Eden/North Collins | 637 |
| Grover Clevlnd. | Buffalo | 112 |
| Hunters Creek | Wales | 759 |
| Isle View Park | Tonawanda | 49 |
| Ontario Street | Buffalo | 1 |
| Riverwalk | Buffalo / Tonawanda | N/A |
| Scoby Dam | Concord | 28 |
| Smith Street | Buffalo | 3 |
| Sprague Brook | Concord/Sardinia | 974 |
| Tow Path | Buffalo | 5 |
| Two-Mile Crk. Greenway | City/Town of Tonawanda | N/A |
| Wendt Beach | Evans | 178 |
| Forestry Lots | Boston, Concord, Holland, Sardinia | 3,171 |
| TOTAL - ALL PARKS | | 10,239 |

* N/A = Not applicable

- *lawn areas, shrubs, trees and rock gardens*
- *Infrastructure: basic underlying features, such as roadways, pathways, parking lots, curbing, steps, site lighting, retaining walls and similar features. Leach fields, lift stations, water and storm water systems are also included in this category.*

In many cases, the database contains additional information about specific items. For example, each data base entry about a building also provides information about its details, such as walls, windows and floors. Information about fixtures within buildings, such as heating or plumbing elements, is also included.

Items in the database were given a general ranking as to their overall condition (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor or Extremely Poor). If fixtures or building elements were associated with that feature, those items were also rated. Excellent rankings were reserved for features that were new or in virtually new condition. Items in generally good shape, showing no major deficiencies, were rated as good. Generally, items rated as good do not require major investment other than routine maintenance, although some small or isolated repairs may be needed. Items that were rated as fair have evidence of damage or wear or are in need of more significant repairs. They are generally usable and do not have serious deficiencies, but are in need of some investment. Elements with significant damage, deficiencies or repair needs were rated as poor. For items rated poor, required repairs or improvements are more extensive, and may warrant replacement rather than repair. The category of extremely poor was reserved for extreme cases, where there are serious deficiencies or problems. Only two items in the database were rated as extremely poor.

The database provides Erie County with a valuable tool for parks planning. It provides a centralized, complete picture of the 16 County parks, and their condition. The database can be queried in a variety of ways, enabling the County to monitor the conditions of parks, assess specific features across all parks, pull details about buildings systems, or look at specific questions, such as handicapped-accessibility. Examples are provided in Volume 4 of this report. Photographs of most features are included. As repairs or changes to facilities are made, new features added or certain features removed, the database can be updated, and the date of the changes noted.

Figure 2-5 - Parks Summary Table

Over time, therefore, the County will be able to monitor and reflect changes to the park system.

2.3.2 OVERVIEW OF INVENTORY

Based on a composite assessment of their improvements, each of the sixteen parks in the inventory was assigned a rating for its overall condition. Half of the parks are categorized as in “good” condition, and half are in “fair” condition. None of the parks rated an “excellent” rating, but none were categorized as “poor”.

Each of the parks was categorized according to its primary function. The Parks Classifications are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.5, but to summarize here, the inventory contains four separate classifications of parks.

- *Heritage parks: Chestnut Ridge, Como Lake, Ellicott Creek and Emery parks are the four original county parks, established in 1926. Akron Falls was added to the system around 1940. These five Heritage Parks contain many historic features, such as unique historic buildings, WPA-era stone walls or other structures. They tend to be larger parks, and have a variety of amenities and features.*
- *Waterfront parks: their location and function relates to waterfront recreational activities, although this category encompasses a variety of different parks, ranging from the Ontario Street Boat Launch, a small, limited-purpose park, to the larger beach parks in Evans.*
- *Special Purpose parks: these parks are noted for a particular strength. Grover Cleveland and Elma Meadows Parks are primarily golf courses, while Sprague Brook is associated with its camping facilities. The Botanical Gardens, although not included in this inventory, would be categorized as a Special Purpose park.*
- *Conservation Parks and Forest Management Areas: these parks have not been included in the inventory, due to their undeveloped state, with the exception of Scobey Dam, a Conservation Park. Scobey Dam was inventoried to enable monitoring of the buildings at the dam site. The County maintains five other Conservation Parks in*

addition to Scobey Dam, as well as thirteen Forest Management Areas.

Of the five Heritage Parks, all were rated in “fair” condition. For the Waterfront Parks, 6 out of 7 were rated “good”, and one was rated “fair”. Two of the three Special Purpose Parks were “good”, and the Scobey Dam, the Conservation Park, was rated “fair” on the basis of the conditions of the buildings at that site. In general, the Waterfront and Special Purpose Parks tend to be in somewhat better condition than the Heritage Parks. In part, this is a function of age: the Heritage Parks are the oldest facilities, while many of the Waterfront Parks are of relatively recent origin. The Heritage Parks also tend to be larger, with more facilities to maintain, and therefore, require more effort to keep in good condition.

The parks range in size from the Ontario Street Boat Launch, which is just over 1 acre, to Chestnut Ridge, which at 1,231 acres is the largest park in the Erie County system. The average size of the parks included in the inventory is approximately 270 acres. The five “Heritage” parks tend to be larger, while the newer parks tend to be on the smaller side. The County maintains a total inventory of over 10,000 acres, but most of this inventory is concentrated in forest management areas or undeveloped parks. The sixteen parks included in the inventory incorporate a total of 4,328 acres of County parkland.

2.3.3 PARKS FEATURES

The parks database inventory looks at eleven categories of parks features. In assessing the condition of these features, there are distinct differences in the status of different types of facilities. Only two items (a bridge and a shelter) were rated as extremely poor, a rating that indicates an extremely deteriorated condition. Most items in the parks are in fair to good condition. Volume 4 of this document provides more detailed information about ratings.

Of all categories of features, playground equipment is in the best condition. Only 2 playground structures (7 percent of the inventory) are in poor condition. Court sports (sports played on paved surfaces) are also in generally good to excellent condition. Field sports facilities are not as well maintained, with only one facility receiving an excellent

rating. Most Site Amenities (picnic tables, grills, benches, fencing and other similar features) are in good to fair condition.

Most structures in the parks are in need of at least some investment, in terms of repairs or upgrades. The majority of picnic shelters are in fair condition. Public Buildings and restrooms are generally in fair to good condition. Support buildings, or structures not used by the public, are not as well maintained, with most in fair to poor condition.

The remaining categories of features relate to the underlying infrastructure and landscape of the parks. Landscape features (lawn, trees, etc.) are generally rated good to fair. Most bridges are in fair condition, although one is in very poor condition. Infrastructure, or the underlying features such as roadways,

2.3.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Erie County Parks system consists of many features, whose condition varies item by item. The inventory prepared as part of this project will be a valuable tool to help determine where improvements should be targeted, and to track changes as these improvements are made. In general, the Heritage Parks, which represent the most prominent and historic parks in the system, are the most in need of upgrades, and the buildings and structures in these parks are most likely to be in poor condition or in need of repairs.

The following table summarizes the ratings by category. For example, 48 percent of the playgrounds rated in the inventory are categorized as being in excellent condition, while none of the bridges are in excellent condition.

2.4 RECREATION TRENDS

Recent trends in regional planning are toward an eco-system based approach to land use management that acknowledges links between natural systems, communities and people. With increased pressure from environmental advocacy groups, and the advent of better strategic and smart growth policy directions, comprehensive plans now identify greenway systems and significant natural features for

retention and protection through environmental policies. In areas where these comprehensive studies are undertaken and followed through, it has resulted in the protection of vast areas of non-developable lands for resource protection and use as public recreational open space areas.

LandVote 2001, a report by the Trust for Public Lands, reports that voters in 17 states approved state and local ballot measures in the last state elections that generated \$1.2 billion for open space and parks. This indicates strong public support and a willingness to commit tax dollars to land conservation and environmental issues.

The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE200) is periodically conducted to examine: participation by Americans in outdoor recreation activities; opinions concerning management of public and private forests and grasslands; the importance and value

| Condition of Features | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|------|------|-----------|-----------|
| Category | Very Poor | Poor | Fair | Excellent | Excellent |
| Playgrounds | 0% | 7% | 14% | 31% | 48% |
| Court Sports | 0% | 18% | 2% | 59% | 20% |
| Field Sports | 0% | 0% | 52% | 36% | 3% |
| Buildings | 0% | 23% | 42% | 32% | 3% |
| Shelters | 0% | 18% | 66% | 12% | 4% |
| Restrooms | 0% | 9% | 57% | 30% | 4% |
| Support Buildings | 0% | 35% | 42% | 18% | 5% |
| Site Amenities | 0% | 8% | 34% | 47% | 11% |
| Landscape | 0% | 14% | 31% | 54% | 0% |
| Bridges | 7% | 13% | 53% | 27% | 0% |
| Infrastructure | 0% | 22% | 31% | 34% | 13% |

Figure 2-6 - Condition of Features Table

placed on the natural environment; and, recreational trips taken away from home. In 1999-2000 the following results were shown, which will have a direct influence on management of the Erie County parks.laskdjalskdki

- 57% visited an outdoor nature centre, nature trail or visitor centre
- 55% went picnicking
- 73% attended a gathering of family or friends in an outdoor area away from home

- 39% bicycled for fun or exercise
- 83.8% walked for exercise or pleasure
- 33.4% went day hiking
- 55% participated in viewing or photographing natural scenery, 42.5% viewed or photographed wildflowers, trees or natural vegetation, 41.9 % viewed or photographed wildlife, and 33.3 % participated in birdwatching.
- More (17.5%) participated in off-road recreation using 4-wheel drive, ATV or motorcycles than participated in downhill skiing (8.3%), snowboarding (4.6%) or cross-country skiing (3.9%).
- 53% went driving for pleasure on country roads in a park, forest or natural setting.
- 36.7% participated in either motorized or non-motorized water sports
- 22.9% went fishing (warmwater streams, rivers or lakes)
- 60% visited a beach or other waterside area, or participated in swimming, snorkeling or scuba diving

When asked about the management of state and federal parks and forests, 52% cited improving natural conditions. 51 % felt too little was spent on protecting the environment.

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is prepared periodically, by the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), as an overall guideline for recreation resource preservation, planning and development. The 2003 update notes that 75% of New York State residents participate in some form of outdoor activity. Using their most recent census data (1998) the number one activity was ‘Relaxing in a Park’ (73.5% of the population), followed by ‘Walking’ (61.8%). ‘Swimming’ (51.8%) was third on the list, followed by ‘Biking’ (35.3%). ‘Visiting Historic Sites’, ‘Boating’ and ‘Fishing’ were also well represented activities, undertaken by close to 25% of the population.

PEER SYSTEM CASE STUDIES

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PARK SYSTEM, ONTARIO, CANADA

In 1990, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) named Ontario’s Niagara Escarpment a World Biosphere Reserve. This designation recognizes the natural features and ecological importance of the escarpment. The Niagara Escarpment Plan is Canada’s first large-scale environmental land use plan, with objectives for balancing protection, conservation, and sustainable development to ensure that the escarpment will remain substantially as a natural environment for future generations. There are over 100 existing and proposed parks and open space areas located within the Niagara Escarpment Plan area, owned and managed through the continued cooperation of seven conservation authorities, provincial ministries, local government, and non-profit organizations acting in the public interest. The majority of the parks are or will be linked by the Bruce Trail. The Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System Plan (NEPOS), provides a cohesive approach to the designation and management of the park system, irrespective of ownership to ensure that the objectives of the Niagara Escarpment Plan are met.

The objectives of the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System (NEPOS) are:

- to protect the unique ecological and historical areas;
- to provide adequate opportunities for outdoor education and recreation;
- to provide adequate public access to the Niagara Escarpment;
- to complete a public system of major parks and open space through additional land acquisition and park and open space planning;
- to secure a route for the Bruce Trail;
- to maintain and enhance the natural environment of the Niagara Escarpment;
- to support tourism by providing opportunities on public land for discovery and enjoyment by Ontario’s residents and visitors;
- to provide a common understanding and appreciation of the Niagara Escarpment;
- to provide leadership in supporting and promoting the principles of the Niagara Escarpment’s UNESCO World Biosphere Designation.

The park system is comprised of public lands that have been acquired to protect the significant features, including waterfalls, landforms, sensitive or unique plant and animal communities, and historical and archaeological sites. Included in the system are lands that are considered by the managing agencies as public parks – conservation areas, provincial parks, and municipal parks, as well as resource management lands, such as county forests, and lands

associated with the Bruce Trail.

Recognizing the origins of the land acquisitions, and the varied nature of the ownership and management of the included park lands, the NEPOS Plan identifies a series of classifications that respect existing uses and functions, while supporting long term objectives for preservation and protection of the Escarpment natural areas and features. The park and open space classifications included within the system are:

Nature Reserve - areas that represent the most significant natural areas, including the regulated Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest. Management practices and uses in the Nature Reserves are oriented to ensuring that the features and values of the natural areas will remain protected for perpetuity. Access is not widely promoted and activities are limited to those furthering scientific understanding and education (i.e. scientific research, natural history interpretation, nature trails, the Bruce Trail, and minimum facilities to support these activities).

Natural Environment - lands that are characterized by the variety and combination of outstanding natural features, historical resources and landscapes. These areas provide opportunities for recreation in conjunction with the protection of natural and cultural features. Activities may include back-country hiking, car camping, and day-use activities in developed or accessible areas.

Recreation - parks that offer the best opportunity as recreational environments, either occurring naturally or capable of being developed to support outdoor recreation opportunities. Management and development of the resources is appropriate to incorporate a wide range of recreation opportunities, which may range from day-use only to overnight camping.

Historical - areas intended to protect and preserve the Escarpment's distinctive archaeological and cultural heritage. Development of facilities is oriented to the protection, enhancement and interpretation of the historic characteristics.

Escarpment Access - typically small areas that provide public access to the Escarpment at appropriate points. Modest facilities supporting day-use may include, viewing points, rest stops, trailheads, picnic sites, fishing areas, beaches and other points of interest.

Resource Management Areas - includes certain public lands that are managed primarily to provide resource related benefits such as forest products, fish and wildlife,

The study also surveyed Park Professionals to identify recreation facility needs in their area, with the following results, in order of priority.

1 HIKING AND WALKING

2 BICYCLE PATHS

3 FIELD GAMES

4 PICNIC FACILITIES

It is expected from these indicators, that there will be increasing demand from outdoor enthusiasts and an aging population for passive parks that accommodate nature-based and self-directed recreation activities, supported by the establishment and protection of primarily natural environment parks. With its extensive river and lakefront lands, and over 11,000 acres of County managed parkland, much of it in a natural state, Erie County is well positioned to deliver these leisure activities. The County will be expected to continue into the foreseeable future, its support and influence on land conservation, environmental protection measures, and the provision of passive recreation opportunities, in conjunction with state and federal initiatives. In particular, it is expected that the revitalization and development of the Buffalo waterfront will be of paramount public and political interest over the next decade.

2.5 ERIE COUNTY PARK USER SURVEY RESULTS

Based on the results taken from the Erie County Parks service survey, there are a significant percentage of park goers residing within the City of Buffalo (16.0%). The remaining percentage, according to the survey results, are spread throughout the rest of Erie County within the suburban and rural towns and villages, not clearly defining one specific area in which participants live.

The results of the Erie County Parks service survey, which was conducted over a number of months during the summer and fall of 2002, show a middle to below average rating for

the parks within the system. On a scale based from 1 being the lowest to 5 being the highest, the majority of the parks received an average rating within the 3 point range on questions dealing with the overall service and maintenance of the parks. There is no park that stands out alone as having an overall great rating of above 3.

Following the national trends, there is a definite emphasis and demand for passive forms of recreation and “nature-based” parks. From the survey results the majority of park goers participate in activities pertaining to walking (65.5%), family/group picnics (49.5%), special events/festivals (39.8%), hiking (38.8%), bike riding (33.5%), and cross country skiing (35.0%). It can be said that park goers in this area like to keep active and enjoy the outdoors.

As for what park goers would like to see in the park system, again, there is no clear activity that stands out alone. Mountain biking did receive the highest percentage of votes (5.34%), however, horseback riding (4.85%), educational programs and more trails were also widely noted (4.37%). Other activities also to be looked at include guided nature tours and wilderness activities. They would also like to see more hiking trails and improved restroom facilities within the park.

While this is just a brief overview of responses, park goers participate in a wide variety of activities. The general public finds that the diversity and natural surroundings and resources of the park system are what make it unique. This is clearly outlined by the results of the surveys.

A sample of the survey is found in the Appendix. Also, a tabulation of general comments received from the User Surveys and various Comment Forms are also located in the Appendix.

or flood control. These areas may also incorporate recreation opportunities.

In addition to the above classifications, several of the parks are identified as **Nodal Parks** – parks that perform the function of visitor reception, information dissemination concerning park and open space activities, points of interest, and attractions in surrounding Escarpment areas and communities. Typically, the larger conservation areas, the Nodal parks typically include a range of developed active and passive recreation facilities.

NEPOS PARKS MANAGEMENT

The NEPOS plan employs a land management strategy based on a zoning system that assigns uses to the lands based on the significance of the features and need for protection, and the recreation potential for the site within the context of the classification system. The zoning recognizes that each park and open space includes a combination of significant resources and features, and existing or potential development. At the outset of the policy development, not all parks will conform to their designation with respect to use and activities. The Niagara Escarpment Plan encourages agencies to bring parks into conformity, as parks are renewed or redeveloped, through appropriate park master plans. To serve as a guideline for the park planning process, the NEPOS system includes six management zones comprised of:

- *Nature Reserve Zones* – include significant natural feature areas which require careful management to ensure long term protection.
- *Natural Zones* – include aesthetic landscapes in which a minimum of development is permitted to support low to moderate intensity recreational activities
- *Historical Zones* – include significant archaeological or historical features or areas which require management that will ensure long term protection.
- *Access Zones* – serve as staging areas (e.g. trailheads, parking lots, maintenance facilities) where minimal facilities support the use of the relatively undeveloped Nature Reserve Zones and Natural and Historical Zones.
- *Development Zones* – provide the main access to the park or open space area, and the facilities that support the site’s recreational activities (e.g. campgrounds, picnic areas maintenance facilities).
- *Resource Management Zones* – provide for intensive resource management (e.g. forest, fisheries, wildlife, water, or multiple-use).

The zones can be applied to all park and open space classifications with the exception of Nature Reserve areas, which can only include Nature Reserve Zones, Access Zones or Historical Zones, in order to protect the significant natural environment features.

DAKOTA COUNTY PARK SYSTEM, MINNESOTA

The Dakota County Park System was established in 1974 under the Metropolitan Parks Act between Metropolitan Council and the park implementing agencies (owned and operated). It serves a similar function in the metropolitan area that State parks serve in the greater Minneapolis area. In 1999, a master plan was undertaken for the Dakota County park system.

The Mission Statement of the Dakota County Parks System is:

To enrich lives by providing a high quality recreation and education opportunities in harmony with natural resource preservation and stewardship.

The Dakota Parks classification system includes:

- Regional Parks - contain a diversity of natural resources, and large enough to support a range of recreational activities, size range of 200-500 acres.
- Park Reserves - provide a range of recreational activities, but are intended to protect natural areas that represent one of the eight pre-settlement landscape units. Minimum size of 1000 acres, optimum size of 2000 acres.
- Regional Trails - linear parks that provide for recreation and travel, following natural or man-made features.
- Special Recreation Features - contain opportunities not typically found in other parks, i.e. zoo, conservatory.

Typical activities found in the Regional Parks include:

- Picnicking,
- Hiking and Nature Trails,
- Horseback Trails
- Water based recreation - swimming, fishing, motorized or non-motorized boating (as applicable)
- Camping (tent and RV)
- Cross-country ski

Not all parks include mountain biking or equestrian trails. Where included, separate systems for hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails are provided.

The Park Reserves include a range of recreation activities, but are primarily focused on the preservation of the pre-settlement landscapes. The parks have a minimum size of 1000 acres, and an optimum size of 2000 acres, of which 80% is to remain undeveloped. Regional Trails are included as 'linear parks' within the system. The Special Recreation Features include sites with specific amenities not included in the other parks such as the Zoo and Conservatory.Park Management

2.6 PARK SYSTEM PEER REVIEW AND CASE STUDIES

The Terms of Reference for the Master Plan study included a peer review of other County Park Systems, including out of state locations. A number of park systems having similarities in size, issues, and mandate were examined. A summary of the park classifications, general policies and management approach of selected case studies are documented within the sidebars. Adjacent Counties in New York State were reviewed for comparison of park financial and operational data. The findings of this analysis are included in Section 8, Implementation Strategy.

Dakota County has less than 2% of its land remaining as natural areas. Approximately half of these lands are protected as parks or nature reserves. Recognizing that the County park system plays an important role in preserving the natural flora and fauna of the County, a **Comprehensive Natural Resources Management Plan** was undertaken in conjunction with the Parks Master Plan. The study provides:

- An inventory and evaluation of natural resource types found within the parks system;
- Recommended management activities for each category;
- Identification of priority actions to ensure preservation/enhancement of the natural features.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY PARK SYSTEM, PENNSYLVANIA

Allegheny County in Pennsylvania is comparable in size to Erie County, supporting a population of 1.26 million people centered in Pittsburgh, and throughout smaller communities in suburban and rural settings. Like Erie, acquisition of the County's first and best known parks took place in the 1920's, with subsequent additions in the 1950's and late 1960's. The Allegheny County park system now comprises some 12,000 acres of parkland in 9 parks located in a 15 mile radius of Pittsburgh. The parkland includes significant natural and cultural heritage features, and is visited by over 11 million people annually.

A Comprehensive Master Plan for the Allegheny County Parks, completed in January of 2002, identifies a number of issues similar to those experienced by Erie County – increased demands on the parks to accommodate varied recreational activities, need for preservation and protection of cultural and natural resources, diminishing fiscal resources, and facilities exhibiting signs of aging and deferred maintenance.

The plan provides a comprehensive policy framework to guide overall county parks decision making, along with specific park by park recommendations, and a proposed implementation program that includes both capital improvements and non-capital actions such as organizational and management changes. The Comprehensive Master Plan recommends a number of new initiatives, programs, and policies to be undertaken for the park system as a whole. Along with physical improvements, the recommendations address parks system operations, management, maintenance, and staffing; park facilities, programs and events; and natural, cultural and historic resource protection. Key system-wide recommendations included in the Allegheny County Parks Comprehensive Master Plan, are as follows:

ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- Implement a new organizational structure comprised of a Parks and Recreation Commission

- *Retain a qualified parks and recreation professional to manage the park system*
- *Implement an effective personnel evaluation, compensation, and incentive system*
- *Implement a new maintenance management system to improve the upkeep of facilities and grounds*
- *Expand the involvement of volunteers and corporate and institutional partners in the Allegheny Parks*
- *Establish a process for coordinating with local municipalities on county park issues*

FINANCIAL

- *Implement a cost recovery policy to be used in setting fees and charges to the public*
- *Implement a capital improvement budgeting process that prioritizes the need for repairs and upgrades to the existing facilities and development of new facilities*

FACILITIES, PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

- *Implement policies for approving new facilities, providing recreational programs, and hosting special events in the county parks*

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

- *Improve the accessibility of county park facilities to persons with disabilities*
- *Establish and maintain defined trail systems throughout the county parks*
- *Implement a system-wide wayfinding signage system*
- *Address priority pedestrian/vehicular conflicts and hazards within the park*

NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- *Conduct analyses to determine the carrying capacity of each county park*
- *Implement a conservation area program to protect areas of natural significance within the parks*
- *Implement a Preservation Plan to protect significant historic and cultural resources within the county parks*